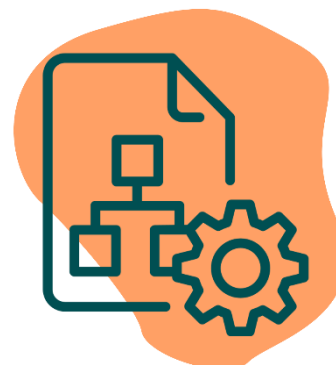The purpose of this document is to give an overview over the changes implemented on the criteria level on 28. September 2023 on Siegelklarheit.de. This includes adjustments on the credibility requirements, applicable to all product groups, and on the requirements for the product group textiles.

Content

I. Credibility Criteria

The complete set of the credibility criteria was revised in 2020-2021 to ensure that it reflects new technical, social and political developments. Part of that revision process was an expert review conducted by the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL Alliance) and Assurance Services International (ASI) as well as two consecutive public consultation rounds.

The steering committee of Siegelklarheit, coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ), approved the minimum requirements in July 2021. In a final step, the revised criteria were harmonized with the database of the International Trade Centre (ITC).

The **objective** of the revision was to
- Reflect recent developments and innovations
- Ensure applicability and continued relevance
- Raise level of ambition
- Clarify language of requirements

Before the revision, the credibility criteria consisted of 101 criteria, including 18 minimum requirements (MiK). After revision there are now **87 criteria in total including 23 minimum requirements**. After a transitional period, the level of ambition will be raised again in March 2025. The following will give an overview of the most significant changes:
   a. **Minimum Requirements**

- 6 new minimum requirements were added and implemented in September 2023.
- 5 criteria will become minimum requirements in March 2025.
- For 4 already established minimum requirements, the level of ambition (Degree of Intensity) will be raised in March 2025.

SSCT ID	Criteria Name	Criteria Question	Changes
A.08	Sustainability Goals and Objectives of the Scheme	Does the scheme owner have sustainability-oriented goals and objectives?	Added as MiK
B.02	Key Issues	Has a set of key sustainability issues in the sector where the scheme operates or product lifecycle been defined in the standard-setting process?	Added as MiK
C.1.02	Scheme Accessibility	Is application (to get certified/verified) open to all potential applicants within the scope of the scheme	Added as MiK

C.1.06	Assessment Reports Availability	Does the scheme owner make, or require assurance providers to make a summary of certification/verification reports (with personal and commercially sensitive information removed) available?	Added as MiK
C.1.09	Certified or Verified Enterprise / Labelled Product List	Does the scheme owner maintain or require assurance providers to maintain a publicly accessible list of certified or verified enterprises, or a list of verified products/product groups, or a list of members (in case of membership-based initiatives)?	Added as MiK
C.2.04	Consistent Decision-Making on Conformity	Does the scheme owner define requirements for decision-making to ensure that assurance providers use consistent procedures for determining the conformity of clients or laboratory testing results with the standard?	Added as MiK
D.2.01	Claims and Labelling Policy	Does the scheme owner have documented requirements for the use of its symbols, logos and/or claims related to its scheme and make them publicly available?	D.2.01 and D.2.02 merged into one criterion
A.15	Complaints Mechanism	Does the scheme owner have a publicly available and easily accessible complaints mechanism?	New MiK in March 2025
B.05	Consultation with Directly Affected Stakeholders	Are stakeholders who are directly affected by the standard provided opportunities to participate in standard setting?	New MiK in March 2025
C.1.12	Notification of Assurance System Changes	Does the scheme owner require that clients and other affected stakeholders are notified of changes to the assurance requirements?	New MiK in March 2025
C.3.01	Personnel Competencies	Does the scheme owner define the qualifications, competency, the required minimum industry audit experience and training requirements for assurance assessors?	New MiK in March 2025
C.4.01	Oversight Mechanism	Does the scheme require an oversight mechanism and is it documented?	New MiK in March 2025
B.04	Public Consultation of Standard	Can stakeholders participate in the standard-setting process?	In March 2025, response option "All stakeholders" will become the minimum requirement
C.1.05	Assurance Provider Complaints and Appeals Mechanism	Does the scheme owner require assurance providers to have an easily accessible complaints and appeals mechanism?	In March 2025, the response option "Yes, publicly" will become the minimum requirement

| C.1.09 | Certified or Verified Enterprise / Labelled Product List | Does the scheme owner maintain or require assurance providers to maintain a publicly accessible list of certified or verified enterprises, or a list of verified products/product groups, or a list of members (in case of membership-based initiatives)? | In March 2025, response option "Yes, including scope" will become the minimum requirement |
| C.2.02 | Independent Conformity Assessment | Does the scheme require a second or third-party conformity assessment of all clients for compliance with its standard? | In March 2025, response option "3rd party" will become the minimum requirement |

b. Overall Criteria Set

Changes were also made to the overall criteria set for credibility. These include changes in order to streamline the criteria set, thus deleting or merging selected criteria. Furthermore, several criteria were added to address specific topics. The following gives an overview over the most significant changes:

SSCT ID	Criteria Name	Criteria Question	Changes
C.1.16	Report on Complaints	Does the scheme owner require assurance providers to report to them on complaints received and, on the actions, taken to resolve the issue?	New criterion
C.1.17	Data Management for Scheme Owners	Does the scheme owner maintain an information management system?	New criterion
C.3.06	Assessors Calibration	Does the scheme owner carry out or require assurance providers to carry out calibration activities to ensure that assessors /auditors are aligned?	New criterion
A.14	Technical Assistance and Access to Finance	Does the scheme implement strategies or activities to support improved performance of participating enterprises, e.g. capacity building, access to finance?	A.14, A.15, A.16 merged into one criterion
C.2.12	Group certification / verification	Does the scheme allow for group certification or verification?	Deleted
D.1.02	Chain of Custody Model	In terms of the level of traceability, which is the least strict CoC model that the scheme allows?	Deleted

II. Product Group Textiles

a. Minimum Requirements

In 2018/2019, **the minimum requirements** for the product group textiles were revised in a public consultation process with an expert review conducted by Oeko Institute, Hessnatur Foundation and FEMNET e.V.

The steering committee of Siegelklarheit, coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ), approved the minimum requirements in July 2021. In a final step, the revised criteria were harmonized with the database of the International Trade Centre (ITC).

The **objective** of the revision was to
- Reflect recent developments and innovations in the sector
- Ensure applicability and continued relevance
- Raise level of ambition
- Clarify language of requirements

Before the revision, the product group textiles counted 17 minimum requirements combined in the dimension environmental friendliness and social responsibility. After the revision the total number of minimum requirements increased to 34. The following will give an overview of the most significant changes:

- 16 new minimum requirements were added
- For 2 of those requirements, the level of ambition (Degree of Intensity) will be raised in March 2025

SSCT ID	Criteria Name	Criteria Question	Changes
Environmental Friendliness			
E34	Biodegradability of Substances	Does the standard include criteria on biodegradability of substances?	Added as MiK
E80	Use of Synthetic Fibres	Does the standard include specific criteria for different types of synthetic fibres (including man-made cellulose fibres)?	Added as MiK
Social Responsibility			
LR21	Debt Bondage	Does the scheme require that workers are not held in debt bondage or forced to work for an employer to pay off debt?	Added as MiK
LR15	Withholding of Papers	Does the standard prohibit the withholding of workers' documents?	Added as MiK
LR37	Freedom of Movement	Does the standard include criteria on the freedom of movement of employees?	Added as MiK
LR07	Age Verification	Does the standard require verification and documentation of age of (young) workers?	Added as MiK
HR23	Maternity Leave	Does the standard include criteria on the right to maternity leave (as defined in ILO 183)?	Added as MiK

LR09	Legal Minimum Wage	Does the standard require paying legal minimum wages?	Added as MiK
LR14	Harassment and Abuse	Does the standard prohibit harassment or abuse of workers?	Added as MiK
LR25	Workplace Conditions	Does the standard include requirements on workplace conditions?	In March 2025, response option "all aspects" will become the minimum requirement
LR18	Workers Representation where Restricted by Law	Does the standard include criteria on the formation of workers representations where freedom of association is restricted by law?	In March 2025, response option "promote" will become the minimum requirement
LR30	Potable Water	Does the standard require that workers have access to safe drinking water?	Added as MiK
LR31	Improved Sanitation Facilities	Does the standard require access to clean and improved sanitation facilities?	Added as MiK
LR32	Building and Construction Safety	Does the standard include criteria on building safety?	Added as MiK
LR33	Fire Preparedness	Does the standard cover fire-preparedness?	Added as MiK
LR40	Emergency & Evacuation Safety	Does the standard include criteria on evacuation safety and emergency management plan?	Added as MiK

b. Overall Criteria Set

The criteria set furthermore consists of additional requirements which are used for the overall assessment. In both dimensions, environmental friendliness and social responsibility, 6 criteria respectively were added to address important topics more comprehensively. These changes are based on recommendations of an expert review conducted by the Proforest Initiative.

SSCT ID	Criteria Name	Criteria Question
Environmental Friendliness		
E25	Hazardous Chemicals	Does the scheme include criteria on hazardous chemicals, as referenced by (1) Stockholm convention, (2) WHO class 1A and B, (3) Rotterdam convention or on similar sector specific lists?
E35	Use of Dyes or Pigments	Does the scheme include criteria on the use of materials containing dyes or pigments based on lead, copper, chromium, nickel, cadmium, cobalt and aluminium in the production phase?
E36	Use of Azo Dyes	Does the standard include criteria on azo dyes that may cleave aromatic amines which are harmful to human health in the production phase?
E37	Use of Chlorine Gas	Does the standard include criteria on the use of chlorine gas, elemental chlorine, chloroorganic compounds as bleaching agent?
E75	GMOs	Does the standard include criteria on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?

E122	Heavy Metals	Does the scheme include criteria on the use of mercury, cadmium, lead, chromiumVI and the ban on the manufacture, the use and treatment of mercury pursuant to the Minamata Convention?
	Social Responsibility	
LR23	Health & Safety Training	Does the standard require training of workers on health and safety issues?
LR41	ILO Core Conventions along the Supply Chain	Does the standard require compliance with (at least) all ILO core labour standards for different suppliers along the supply chain?
LR36	Housing	Does the standard require safe and appropriate housing for all workers?
EC10	Supply Chain Responsibility	Does the standard include criteria for the production processes beyond primary production?
CR01	Equal Opportunities	Does the standard require measures that aim at generating equal economic opportunities for women and men?
LR44	Information on Labour Rights	Does the standard include requirements to inform workers about their labour rights?